



Southwestern Texas Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Synod Staff

The Rev. Dr. Ray Tiemann
Bishop

The Rev. Susan J. Briner
Bishop's Associate

The Rev. Dr. Judith Spindt
Director for Evangelical Mission/
Bishop's Associate

Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt
Bishop's Associate for Faith Formation,
Communication & Administration

Deanna Zitelman
Administrative Assistant to the Bishop

Susie Winterhalter
Bookkeeper

Rhonda Westerfield
Part-time Receptionist

The Rev. Sam Radoman
Coordinator for the Parish Ministry
Training Program, Contract

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

At the end of this week I will finish my third term as the Bishop of the Southwestern Texas Synod. As I pondered a Scripture passage that might encapsulate my feelings, I settled on Ephesians 3:20-21: *“Now to God, who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”*

It has been an honor to serve these eighteen years. It has been filled with blessings and heartaches, joys and sorrows. I have blessed to experience the width and depth of this church, visiting all the ministries in our synod, as well as the churchwide office on many occasions, all eight seminaries, other synods, our Companion Synod – The Lutheran Church in Costa Rica, and Lutheran partners around the world. The good far outweighs any difficult times.

I thank my wife, Debbie, and our children, Daniel and Rebecca, who were 15 and 11 when I was first elected, for their continued support and patience with my busy schedule and being away from home so often. Also, Debbie and I thank you for your generous gifts to the Tiemann Endowment for Leadership Development. The synod's leaders will be truly blessed with over \$60,000 in that fund already, and we pray that this will be a continual blessing to all types of leaders in our synod.

I especially thank our pastors and deacons, lay leaders and youth ministers, Deans and Synod Council, synod officers and synod staff, Lutheran social ministry organizations and agencies, colleagues in the ELCA Conference of Bishops and churchwide offices, and ecumenical and interfaith partners. We have worked together to “accomplish abundantly far more (together) than all we can ask or imagine.”

I plan to “take a deep breath” until the end of the year with just some supply preaching, home projects, and relaxation, but when you see me in the future, call me “Pastor.” The title of “Bishop” now belongs to Pr. Sue Briner, and I will remember her as my Bishop in my daily prayers. She has many gifts that will serve this synod well, and I ask you to support her in that important calling as you supported me.

God's peace,

Bp+ Ray Tiemann

